



MIDDLEWICH HIGH SCHOOL

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HEIDI THURLAND B.A Hons *Headteacher*

Dear Parents, Carers Students and Staff,

I am writing to you at the end of our first week as a virtual/not virtual school, to firstly acknowledge and thank each and every one of you for your exceptional work during a difficult period. In my view, we are navigating through an uncertain period with determination, commitment and calmness. It has been my express aim to ensure that everyone feels communicated with and cared for. The feedback I have had from families, students and staff is that this is the general feeling amongst you all. To achieve this is no mean feat! It is important to acknowledge the incredible work completed behind the scenes by our teaching staff, support staff, SEND team, Admin & Finance team, Site team and our brilliant Cleaners and Caterers.

As a new Head I think I could be forgiven for feeling a little daunted by a global pandemic two terms into my leadership. However at no point have I felt that way, rather I know that I am incredibly lucky to have such a wonderful community and such brilliant staff to work with. Whilst it should not be underestimated how complex leadership is at this time, it is much easier leading a school where all the people within and around it are frankly amazing. Here are some personal thanks from me this week:

Dearest students – We are seeing the brilliant work you are doing and we are so proud of everything you are achieving. Keep it up! Stay kind and make your parents/carers a brew from time to time – they need it!

Dear parents & carers – Wow! How amazing are you! I am sure all of you now have permanently damaged hamstrings from Joe Wickes / our daily PE workouts (proof that Mr Pearce really does wear PE shorts at all times!!!). No doubt you are covered in paint and perhaps calling on lessons from your own childhood to work out those awkward maths questions! You are fantastic – take it steady, one day at a time and only do what you can do, believe me it is enough.

To all my incredible staff –Just thank you. You make my job ‘easy’. You are going above and beyond on a daily basis for our community. Families tell me daily just how much they appreciate your work. Our keyworkers are so grateful for the essential child care you are providing; your work is saving lives and keeping people safe.

Finally here is some information that you have been asking me for over the last few days:

Free School Meal vouchers – We have provided all FSM families with four weeks of vouchers. We took the decision to include Easter holidays within this provision even though usually you would not receive this service. After the Easter holidays you will receive further vouchers to the value of £15 per week per child on FSM. This is an increase on the value of the previous vouchers from £2.50 to £3 per lunch. We have still not had clarification from the DfE on the value so we have ensured we are making the same provision as other Secondary schools in the area. A small but important gesture at a difficult time financially for many of you.

Easter Provision – We will be open *throughout* Easter Mon-Fri 8.30-3.15 each day for essential (**last resort**) provision for keyworkers and students who are at high risk due to safeguarding concerns. SEND students will take their holiday as they usually would. During the Easter break students are not required to wear school uniform when they attend. We will communicate with keyworkers accessing the provision regarding this. My thanks to families for keeping your children at home, this means we can run a skeleton staff which is sustainable. My staff are willingly giving up their holiday entitlement during this period, but I must emphasise it is for *essential* childcare only where *no other solution* is viable. Staff will **NOT** be setting work over Easter. Safeguarding keep in touch calls will continue however for identified families.

School Reception – We have now moved our reception off site; staff will be working remotely. If you call reception you will be given a number to call to re-direct your enquiry. Please do not call reception to ask if student work is being marked, to raise issues with connectivity to the internet or for queries on home learning. Calls into reception are ear marked for safeguarding & keyworker communication. Help us keep our phone lines clear as much as possible. You can direct questions *privately* through Facebook messaging or our admin email.

Yr11 – I am meeting (remotely) with my senior team on Tuesday to agree our communications with you. We are going to carefully plan our response to ensure we make sure we give you the best advice going forward. It is clear however that as I said to you when we met for the final time ‘Knowledge is power’ so continue to read and develop your thinking, staff are setting work that will help you with this. I am also going to look to rearrange the prom for a date in the Autumn term – more on that when we know more about the potential lock down periods etc.

Yr10 – You must be a little concerned to have lost so much of your learning time, don’t worry I am on the case! In due course I will let you know what Ofqual’s position is regarding your GCSE examination content as we believe there will be some changes to this. In the meantime make sure you engage as fully as you can with the work you are being set.

To any *new intake families* (current Yr6) we will be in touch in due course regarding transition/uniform etc. You are as important to us as our current students – we will get it right, don’t worry.

Best wishes, stay safe



Heidi Thurland
Headteacher
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